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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how public multicampus university system offices address two areas where there is strong state interest but where this interest may conflict with traditional university priorities: undergraduate arts and sciences education and university responsibility for improving K-12 education. It is hypothesized that system offices with strong research university campuses give more attention and resources to undergraduate arts and sciences education, seen as relatively central to the academic core, than to undergraduate or graduate-level teacher/educator professional preparation and related K-12 activities within the university, seen as relatively marginal. More broadly, the study examines how intermediary organizations (university system administrations) exercise influence on and are influenced by those with whom they deal. The systems administrations compared are those within the State University of New York, the University of North Carolina, the University of Wisconsin, and the University of California. The paper discusses results of the comparative analysis in terms of the common system roles and responses, the differences in system office responses to undergraduate and K-12 education, differences among university systems, the impact of these office systems, and the difficulties posed by systems' support coming into conflict with campus or legislative regulations. Policy implications are discussed. (Contains 31 references.) (GLR)

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MULTICAMPUS UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS: HOW SYSTEM OFFICES COORDINATE UNDERGRADUATE AND K-12 EDUCATION

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ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Marriott City Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 29 - November 1, 1992. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most analyses of university governance, administration, and leadership focus on the single university campus. Yet the multicampus system has become the dominant form of public university organization (Lee, 1992). Indeed, the majority of U.S. higher education students attend campuses that are part of a multicampus system with a systemwide governing board and some kind of central system administration (Kerr and Gade, 1989). Although the functions and powers of these systems and systemwide administrations vary substantially, systemwide offices have the potential for exercising broad leverage over the campuses within their systems through budget and program review powers. On the other hand, because they are positioned between the campuses and the state, public university system offices may be seen by both campus and state actors as representing the "other side," may be bypassed by either, or may find themselves pulled by conflicting internal and external demands and expectations.

The role of the multicampus university systemwide administration becomes particularly critical in arenas where strong state interests and pressures conflict with traditional university academic values or priorities. For example, in recent years, state governors and legislatures have provided public universities with incentives, threats, and mandates to improve both undergraduate education and professional programs of elementary and secondary school teacher preparation; particularly in teacher preparation, legislatures have also imposed substantial regulation (Ewell, 1991; Darling-Hammond and Berry, 1988; Hill, 1989; Hines, 1988). However, within the university, especially the research university, teacher and school administrator preparation, as well as other K-12 schooling activities, have been viewed as marginal, compared to the arts and sciences disciplines (Clifford and Guthrie, 1988; Judge, 1982; Sykes, 1985). By contrast, undergraduate arts and sciences education lies

at the heart of the academic enterprise because it relies primarily on the "core" disciplines and faculties. Although universities have typically accorded less priority to undergraduate education than to research and graduate education (Boyer, 1990; Lynton and Elman, 1987), undergraduate arts and sciences enrollments are also usually the largest enrollment area on a campus.

This study explores how public multicampus university system offices address two areas where there is strong state interest but where this interest may conflict with traditional university priorities: undergraduate arts and sciences education and university responsibility for improving K-12 eduction. In addition, I hypothesized that system offices with strong research university campuses would give more attention and resources to undergraduate arts and sciences education (seen as relatively central to the academic core) than to undergraduate or graduate-level teacher/educator professional preparation and related K-12 activities within the university (seen as relatively marginal). More broadly, the study examines how "intermediary" organizations (here, university system administrations) exercise influence on and are influenced by those with whom they deal. Specifically, this study addresses the following research and policy questions:

1. *How do system offices of public multicampus universities deal with their campuses on matters important to state interests and state policy makers? Specifically, how, if at all, do system offices coordinate or facilitate campus activities in undergraduate arts and sciences education and in teacher/educator professional preparation and other K-12 education matters? Do system offices conduct themselves differently in these two areas?*
2. *How do system offices respond to state policy makers in areas important to them, i.e., undergraduate education and K-12 education issues? Do system offices conduct themselves differently in these two areas?*

3. *How do multicampus university system offices differ among themselves (for example, in their views of their own functions)? What factors appear to relate to these differences? Do they, nevertheless, also share similar responses?*

4. *Given their potential importance, what strategies can system offices use to initiate, support, or sustain system or campus-level reforms in undergraduate education and K-12 education?*

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Multicampus university systems are organizations "with formal governance responsibilities regarding other organizations" (Chaffee, 1989; p. 3). In addition, the central administrations of these systems act as intermediary organizations between other organizations (i.e., individual campuses and state legislatures or agencies). University system administrations face inward toward the campuses they coordinate and represent and outward toward the state governments that provide their budgets and to which they must respond. System offices are buffers and advocates for their campuses, as well as regulators and conduits of state regulations. Like statewide higher education coordinating agencies, university system offices typically have little or no clear constituency, visibility, separate identity, or acceptance of their legitimacy by the campus community or the public at large (Lee and Bowen, 1971; Newman, 1987; Pettit, 1987).

Public university system offices share several characteristics with the central or head offices of public bureaucracies (Downs, 1967; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Rourke, 1976; Zald, 1970). They report directly or indirectly to political authorities (here, to governing boards appointed or elected by political authorities). Because they are responsible for securing the organization's budget from the state, they are

both more aware of the organization's fiscal dependence on the state and less able to ignore state demands for accountability as a condition for continued funding. One would therefore expect university system officers to be more responsive to external political pressures than are campus faculty or administrators within a multicampus system.

As the arm of their governing boards, university system offices have significant powers to coordinate, influence, and regulate their campuses, although these powers vary considerably from system to system, as does their readiness to exercise them (Hines, 1988). University system offices generally determine budgetary allocations to their campuses, review and approve campus academic programs, and develop systemwide policies and guidelines on academic personnel (Kerr and Gade, 1989; Lee and Bowen, 1975). System offices can also exert significant influence as "third parties" that bring together faculty and administrators from different campuses (or from university campuses and public schools) to develop common strategies or projects or to negotiate differences among them. Third parties that can influence or determine who participates in a systemwide effort (for example, deciding which faculty members will serve on university-wide review committees or which campuses will administer systemwide projects) can influence university reform initiatives (Gray, 1989; Hawthorne and Zusman, 1992). However, Chaffee (1989) states that most higher education system offices do not emphasize leadership or policy but rather relatively concrete and management-oriented activities.

Unlike the statewide coordinating agency, the university system office is part of the university and its academic culture. With few exceptions, its key officers have risen through faculty and campus administrative ranks, and system administrators' overall perspectives and priorities reflect those of the academy, including the value given to faculty authority over academic matters (Clark, 1983; Lee, 1992; Lee and

Bowen, 1971). These perspectives influence system administrators' actions. For example, one might expect system offices to accord programs that have relatively low campus status and priority (such as teacher education) less resources and less readiness to oppose external intervention than areas with higher campus priority (such as undergraduate arts and sciences education).

Nevertheless, campus faculty and administrators often consider system offices as another regulatory layer that increases bureaucracy, centralizes decisions that should be made on campus, decreases flexibility, and limits campus autonomy (Kauffman, 1980; Newman, 1987). Campuses also have broad sources of their own power and independence, as well as a wide variety of resources to ignore, divert, reinterpret, or subvert regulatory efforts by higher levels (Downs, 1967; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). In addition, universities' special characteristics -- including their relatively flat hierarchy, collective and thereby more ambiguous responsibility over important decisions, problematic goals, and the tradition of academic freedom -- lead to organizational structures that are "loosely coupled systems" (Weick, 1976) or even "organized anarchies" (Cohen and March, 1974) and are "notoriously difficult to change" (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 202).

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study builds upon an earlier study by the author of how multicampus university system administrations address issues of teacher education and related K-12 matters (Zusman, 1989). The current study expands on that study and examines differences in the ways that system offices act and react in issues involving undergraduate arts and sciences education, compared to issues involving K-12 education. The study analyzes systemwide administrations in four public multicampus universities: the University of California (UC), the State University of

New York (SUNY), the University of North Carolina (UNC), and the University of Wisconsin (UW). These systems were chosen because they share several characteristics: they have strong research-oriented campuses (which might be expected to dominate system perspectives and in which undergraduate and teacher education issues typically receive less value than do research and graduate education), coordinate a significant number of campuses (nine to 64), and have governors or legislatures that have been highly active in education matters. They also are diverse in size, geographical location, degree of heterogeneity of their campuses, and system origin (i.e., expansion from a single campus, as at UC, or state-mandated consolidation of existing institutions or groups of institutions, as at the other systems). Table 1 identifies the size and scope of the four systems and some of the differences among them.

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS

System	Date Est.	# Campuses	Campus Types	Enrollment, Fall 1991 Total	% Undergrad.	% Educ. Degrees & Credentials (90-91)*
UC	1868	9	Doct.	166,000	76%	4%
SUNY	1948	64	Doct., 4-yr, 2-yr	404,000	90%	19%
UNC	1972	16	Doct., 4-yr	147,000	83%	16%
U W	1971	14	Doct., 4-yr, (2-yr)	151,000	86%	15%

**All levels (i.e., B.A. through doctorate); UC does not offer undergraduate degrees in Education.*

The study focuses on *system-level or systemwide* activities, not on individual campus initiatives and activities (i.e., activities initiated or nurtured by the system office or those undertaken by participants across the system) in the areas of curriculum and instruction. Thus, within the *undergraduate education* area, the study focuses primarily on system-level activities regarding curricular reforms, student assessment, and teaching assistant (T.A.) training. Within the *K-12 education* area, it focuses primarily on pre-service teacher/other educator professional preparation (at all levels) and in-service professional development for K-12 educators. For this study, I conducted semi-structured interviews with systemwide administrators and staff in each of the four systems, as well as with campus administrators responsible for programs and initiatives in undergraduate education, teacher preparation, or other K-12 areas. Because I was especially interested in the influence of research-oriented values on campus and system perspectives, most campus interviews were with administrators at doctoral/research campuses; one must note, however, that system offices in three of the systems (SUNY, UNC, and UW) deal with both doctoral and non-doctoral campuses. State, system, and independent reports on the universities' activities in undergraduate and K-12 education, budgetary documents, and other materials were also examined.

FINDINGS: SYSTEM OFFICE ROLES AND ACTIVITIES IN UNDERGRADUATE AND K-12 EDUCATION

1. ***Leadership.*** For the four university systems examined, some systemwide offices have played significant roles in setting systemwide agendas, initiating and implementing universitywide programs, facilitating campus reforms, and sometimes regulating campus activities in undergraduate or K-12 education. Two

examples, one in undergraduate arts and sciences education and one in K-12 education, illustrate system office roles:

- Lower-division education reforms: In 1985, in response to national reports critical of undergraduate education and resulting public and legislative interest, the University California system office convened a universitywide task force of senior campus faculty and administrators to undertake a broad review of lower division education. The resulting "Smelser Report" (named after the task force's chair) issued broad and somewhat controversial recommendations for increased curricular attention to international and multicultural issues, freshman-sophomore seminars, faculty evaluation, T.A. training, and other concerns. Over the past six years, the system office has sustained attention and support for improving undergraduate education, including convening a second university-wide committee to recommend follow-up actions and a high-visibility all-faculty conference on undergraduate education, provided $300,000 for campuses to develop student assessment initiatives, implemented systemwide policies on T.A. training, and called for campus reports outlining plans to develop more lower-division seminars, research opportunities for undergraduates, and improved T.A. training.

- Doctoral programs for school administrators: In 1989, in response to legislative calls to strengthen educator preparation, the University of North Carolina system created a committee comprised of campus administrators and school superintendents to design systemwide guidelines for new doctoral programs for senior school administrators. The resulting Ed.D. in Educational Leadership program is now being offered at five UNC campuses, with three other campuses planning similar programs. Under the guidelines established by the systemwide committee, the new programs have several special features. For example, the programs (which are designed for working professionals), maintain students in distinctive cohorts, provide one-year administrative internships, and meet specific

core course and research methodology requirements. It was expected that programs would also require students to spend at least one year of full-time study; but anticipated legislative fellowships to facilitate this have not been forthcoming to date.

Nevertheless, although system offices have imposed some regulations on their campuses, especially in the teacher/educator preparation area (a point that will be discussed below), direct system dictation of academic curricula or instruction has been very limited. Administrators in each of the system offices described direct regulation as "inappropriate" and defined their roles as setting guidelines, facilitating campus actions, acting as catalysts, and building consensus, not as regulators. This self-limiting role reflects the academic orientations of top system administrators (most of whom came from campus faculty and administrative positions), as well as the countervailing powers of the campuses and academic senates, and (for SUNY and UW) the limited discretionary budget resources available to the system office.

One exception is review of proposals for new academic programs, which all the system offices undertake to a greater or lesser extent. Here, too, however, the extent of actual system regulation varies considerably. At UNC, for example, the system office requires a thorough justification of all new academic programs, including discussion of fiscal implications, quality issues, and program duplication. By contrast, the UC system office reviews undergraduate program proposals in a fairly limited fashion. At SUNY, although the system office reviews program proposals, an informant stated that the system office does not disapprove proposals (although it may work with campuses to improve them, before forwarding them to the state education department).

2. ***Areas of involvement.*** Not surprisingly, given system administrators' reluctance to intrude in academic matters, system offices were rarely involved in defining campus academic curriculum in either undergraduate or K-12 education. For example, in recommending a more international, interdisciplinary, and culturally diverse curriculum, UC's Smelser Task Force and a 1989 follow-up report only listed examples of appropriate courses and approaches. At UW, new undergraduate programs are reviewed by external consultants mutually agreed upon by the system office and the campus, but the focus is on campus-defined goals and objectives (although the campus is prompted to discuss such matters as integrative curriculum and cross-cultural perspectives.) In the undergraduate education areas examined, the system offices appear to have been most active in student assessment (for example, by setting broad guidelines, requiring campus plans, and reporting back to the legislature), often in response to legislative "request" if not mandate. In the K-12 education areas examined, the system offices most often engaged in review of the university's teacher education role and in support for in-service professional development activities for K-12 educators. (Note: because the study focused on curricular and instructional activities, it did not examine areas where system offices likely have had longer and larger roles -- for example, in high school outreach and admissions requirements and community college transfer programs.)

Where the system office did become involved in campus curriculum, it was in the area of teacher/educator preparation. For example, the UNC system office instigated major revisions in the standards and requirements for teacher preparation; its guidelines for the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership were also seen by some campus faculty and administrators as intruding on their academic autonomy. The UW system is planning a "lateral" review of teacher education (and other

professional programs) in the system, with the understanding that some programs might be modified, eliminated, or consolidated.

Table 2 presents examples of university system office involvement in undergraduate and K-12 education.

TABLE 2
EXAMPLES OF UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OFFICE INVOLVEMENT IN UNDERGRADUATE AND K-12 EDUCATION

	Undergraduate Education
UC	Systemwide reports and conferences on lower-division education, T.A. training Incentive funds for student assessment
SUNY	Systemwide assessment initiative Chancellor's Venture Fund
UNC	System planning to assess student learning and development
UW	Systemwide policies and initiatives on student assessment and T.A. selection and training
	K-12 Education
UC	Development of statewide network of K-12 California Subject Matter Projects
SUNY	Chancellor's Task Force on Teacher Education SUNY 2000 (goal area: public education)
UNC	Design of new doctoral program for senior school administrators
UW	"Lateral" review of all UW teacher education programs

3. ***Approaches and strategies.*** System offices in the study utilized a number of approaches and strategies to influence undergraduate or K-12 activities on the campuses:

- *Network building:* Perhaps most often, system offices helped to share expertise and build intercampus networks by bringing together people from

different campuses (and sometimes different disciplines and education sectors) to discuss common problems -- for example, on ways to conduct T.A. training (SUNY), or to develop discipline-based pedagogy for teachers (UC).

- *Consensus development:* System staff sought both to identify and to build campus consensus on issues, for example, by convening systemwide committees to develop recommendations on undergraduate and K-12 education. They also convened regular meetings of particular campus officials (for example, education deans at UNC) to create a sense of a universitywide identity, discuss and develop a united front against inappropriate state interventions, or build support for new initiatives.

- *Shaping of the discussion:* Because system offices often determined who would participate on systemwide task forces on undergraduate or K-12 education, they helped shape the resulting recommendations and initiatives.

- *Incentives:* System offices also provided seed money for campus-based initiatives -- for example, to develop student outcomes measures (UW) or to design intercampus doctoral programs in education (UC).

- *Threat of external intervention:* System offices have used the threat (and reality) of state interference to justify requiring campuses to provide plans for improving undergraduate student assessment or other areas of undergraduate education. By requiring campus plans and reports, system offices have prompted campus discussions and actions that might otherwise have occurred more slowly or not at all.

- *Program review:* Typically, system offices also reviewed or at least set guidelines for campus proposals for new academic programs (although review of undergraduate programs was usually less intense).

• *Regulation:* Although relatively infrequent in the areas studied, system offices did regulate campus activities, for example, by imposing regulations on requirements for teacher education (UNC).

• *Program administration:* Even more infrequently, system offices directly administered systemwide programs in undergraduate or K-12 education, such as UC's statewide network of K-12-oriented California Subject Matter Projects.

4. ***System/campus relations.*** While system administrators tended to define themselves as catalysts, facilitators, buffers against state pressures, and sometimes as program advocates, campus administrators tended to view them quite differently. Frequently, campus administrators viewed the system office as simply another bureaucratic layer that slowed down the process of campus change and imposed unrealistic demands for reports and accountability measures. One campus administrator described the system office as a growing bureaucratic entity that "had to be fed" with continual reports and plans "piled one on top of the next." Another campus administrator voiced his concern that the system office at times became a funnel for state pressures, rather than a buffer against it.

Nevertheless, despite such expressions of campus tension toward system office demands, overall relations appeared less strained than in the 1989 study I conducted on system involvement in K-12 education issues. In addition, campus perspectives differed: administrators at newer, smaller or less research-oriented campuses tended to be more favorable toward the system administration, which may serve to protect them against the stronger campuses in the system, while those at elite research campuses, who perceive they could do better by going directly to the legislature and without system constraints, were more critical. Perhaps a more telling indictment of system offices was campus administrators' low expectations for

them. Even those who appeared supportive of a system role did not believe that their system office could provide them much assistance.

5. ***Responses to State policy-makers.*** In the area of undergraduate education and especially in teacher/educator preparation, state policy-makers have threatened or imposed legislation, budget cuts, budget language, or regulations to pressure universities to respond to perceived public policy needs. Some significant state interventions have occurred in areas traditionally considered within the university's purview. For example, the Wisconsin legislature passed a law that required UW to require students to take ethnic-sensitivity courses, and the California legislature enacted a measure requiring university faculty who teach credential courses to "participate" regularly in the public schools through teaching and other activities. To prevent or at least limit such external interventions, system offices have utilized a number of strategies, including the following:

- *"Voluntary" responses:* UNC, for example, got a sizeable number of education faculty to volunteer to teach in the public schools, in order to ward off a legislative bill that would have mandated such UNC faculty to do so.

- *Redefinition of external demands:* UC, for example, succeeded in having a bill that would have required it to adopt specific student assessment measures amended to require another agency to complete a review of existing measures. Typically, UC works not to oppose outright but to amend, re-amend, and amend again objectionable legislature bills, until it can "live" with them. To address its board's concerns about the nature and quality of undergraduate education, the UW system office formed a joint regents/system/campus effort to develop plans for undergraduate reform within the context of UW campus missions and autonomy.

• *United front:* UC also joined with the California State University system to present a unified position in seeking reform of the state's highly regulatory teacher education program review process.

• *Opposition to external regulation:* When a measure appeared to pose a significant threat to university autonomy, and when other steps had failed, system offices threw the weight of their resources into opposing the measure.

6. ***Changes in system office roles.*** System office involvement in undergraduate arts and sciences education and in university attention to K-12 education appears to have increased significantly over the past decade, particularly in areas such as student assessment, support for doctoral programs for school administrators, and T.A. training As noted earlier, the UC system office has provided sustained attention to undergraduate education since 1985. UC also developed and administers a statewide network of seven K-12-oriented California Subject Matter Projects (in writing, mathematics, science, history-social science, and other key areas), with a total of 77 sites across the state, and it recently convened a university-wide committee to re-examine UC's missions in professional education. During that same period, the UNC system convened a statewide task force on the preparation of teachers, revised requirements for teacher education, and designed a new program for senior school administrators. In response to legislative mandate, UNC also designed the general framework for a five-year plan and annual systemwide reports to assess institutional effectiveness, including assessment of student learning and development. The SUNY system has undertaken a system-level assessment initiative, convened a Chancellor's Task Force on Teacher Education, and instituted the Chancellor's Venture Fund to support innovative campus projects. The UW system developed new undergraduate initiatives regarding student assessment, selection and training of teaching assistants, and

other areas, and it is planning a lateral review of all teacher education programs within UW.

According to informants, external pressure, particularly from legislative and other state policy-makers, is the primary reason for increased system-level involvement in areas that in the past received little or no system office attention. State policy-makers have threatened or taken action particularly in teacher education and in assessment of student learning. National reports, such as *A Nation At Risk* (1983) and *Involvement in Learning* (1984), also contributed to a changed view of the needs and responsibilities of universities, as have changes in accreditation standards.

CONCLUSIONS

1. ***Common system roles and responses.*** Even though the four university systems in the study differed in size, system origin, heterogeneity and other factors, nevertheless, system office administrators in all four systems generally shared similar perspectives, adopted a number of common approaches with regard to strengthening university activities in undergraduate arts and sciences education and in K-12 education, and often pursued similar strategies with state policy-makers. All have taken some kind of action in the areas of undergraduate and K-12 education, and their involvement has grown significantly over the past decade. However, for the most part, all have adopted a cautious and self-limiting role in these areas, particularly in university curricular matters. System offices have typically emphasized approaches intended to facilitate networking among campuses (and between campuses and other education institutions), identify consensus, help shape university priorities, and buffer the campuses from more direct state influence.

The similar system responses would appear to reflect several factors: on the one hand, the academic and campus orientations of most top-level system administrators, at least in academic affairs units, their limited resources, and their lack of a defined constituency; and, on the other hand, external pressures nationwide for changes in undergraduate and K-12 education, in conjunction with a sometimes small number of system administrators who support and advocate such changes.

2. ***Differences in system office responses to undergraduate and K-12 education***. Despite many similar approaches and strategies, system office administrators treated undergraduate arts and sciences education and K-12 education issues differently, in their relationships both with their campuses and with state policy-makers or executive agencies. Externally, system offices appeared somewhat more tolerant of legislative and state agency regulation of university teacher/educator preparation programs (particularly undergraduate or credential-only programs) than of undergraduate arts and sciences education, providing fewer staff resources to oppose the former. One example of this is the 1983 California legislation requiring university teaching credential faculty to "participate" in the schools, which the system office let pass with little attention. Although the UC system office has since increased its attention to teacher education matters and in 1989 successfully sponsored a bill to limit the scope of the original legislation, in doing so, it still accepted the legislature's right to set conditions for credential faculty. University system offices have generally allowed state teacher credentialing agencies to set far more detailed requirements for the content, scope, and instruction of teacher preparation programs than are set by any other agency in any other field except, perhaps, medical areas.

Internally, the ways in which system offices dealt with campus faculty or administrators differed as well. In addressing undergraduate education matters, system offices tended to engage in more widespread participation by senior faculty through a lengthy and iterative process of consultation with campus and academic senate representatives. In addition, at least for programs within universities' instructional budgets, system offices provided more resources and staff time for systemwide undergraduate education initiatives (e.g., for student assessment and T.A. training) than they did for teacher/educator preparation. (However, this may not be true for programs funded in other areas. For example, UC provides more funding for its system-administered Subject Matter Projects for K-12 teachers, through its public service budget, than the various undergraduate system initiatives examined.) By contrast, system offices tended to take a more regulatory or monitoring approach to teacher/educator preparation programs than to undergraduate education programs -- for example, the UNC system's teacher education regulations and doctoral curricular guidelines, and the UW's lateral teacher education review.

In conducting this study, I hypothesized that system offices with strong research university campuses would give more attention and resources to undergraduate arts and sciences education (seen as relatively central to the academic core) than to teacher/educator preparation (both undergraduate and graduate) and related K-12 activities within the university (seen as relatively marginal). This hypothesis seems to have been borne out -- but it may be that several factors, including centrality/marginality, may be involved. Although teacher education is a relatively large enterprise within some of these systems -- and, according to Sykes (1985) and others, a "cash cow" for the university, undergraduate education is inevitably a larger proportion of total enrollments; and, on some campuses (generally, non-doctoral campuses), teacher education is part of undergraduate

enrollments. Logically, then, we might expect system offices to give more attention to the larger entity. In addition, despite state policy-makers' growing interest in undergraduate education, to date policy-makers continue to express greater interest in public K-12 education and considerably more willingness to regulate it -- and, by extension, to regulate the preparation of educators for the K-12 schools. Nevertheless, the negative attitudes toward teacher education often expressed by arts and sciences faculty and the willingness of campus administrators to cut education programs in times of budget crisis (Clifford and Guthrie, 1988) suggest that education's perceived marginality plays a role as well.

3. ***Differences among university systems.*** The four university system offices differed significantly in the extent to which they were involved in facilitating, supporting, or regulating undergraduate arts and sciences education or K-12 education issues, in the specific curricular and instructional areas examined. The UC system provided the most extensive resources and facilitation, both in the K-12 area and in undergraduate education. The most notable examples of the UC system's leadership are the statewide network of K-12 Subject Matter Projects and UC's undergraduate education initiatives, both noted earlier.

By comparison, there was relatively low system office regulation of undergraduate and K-12 education matters in the areas examined. (Again, the study did not focus on regulation through general program review or budgetary authority.) To the extent that system offices did regulate undergraduate and K-12 education in the areas examined, UNC (which revised university-wide requirements for teacher education and implemented specific university-wide guidelines for Ed.D. programs for school administrators) appeared to rank highest in the K-12 area. In the undergraduate education area, UW (which adopted policies on the selection, training and evaluation of teaching assistants and implemented joint

system/campus reviews of general education requirements) appeared to rank highest.

Table 3 presents rankings of university system office facilitation and regulation of undergraduate and K-12 education, based on information from informants and documents regarding specific areas of undergraduate and K-12 education. It should be noted that these rankings do not reflect equal differences from one rank to the next within a category, nor is there equivalence among categories.

TABLE 3
LEVEL OF SYSTEM OFFICE INVOLVEMENT IN SELECTED UNDERGRADUATE & K-12 EDUCATION AREAS*
(Highest to Lowest)

Undergraduate Education		K-12 Education Issues	
Facilitation/Resources	Regulation	Facilitation/Resources	Regulation
UC	UW	UC	UNC
UW	UC	UNC	UW
SUNY	UNC	UW	UC
UNC	SUNY	SUNY	SUNY

**Areas examined: Within undergraduate education: system-level activities regarding curricular reforms, student assessment, and T.A. training. Within K-12 education: teacher/other educator pre-service professional preparation (at all levels) and in-service professional development for K-12 educators.*

What explains these differences? One might expect that system office involvement in facilitating and/or regulating undergraduate or K-12 education activities would be related to the extent to which their campuses concentrate their enrollments in undergraduate education or teacher/educator preparation. This does not appear to be the case. (See Table 4.) Rather, the level of system office involvement appears to be a function primarily of the system office's overall powers and resources and of traditional divisions of authority between system office,

campuses, and state authorities. Thus, the UC system office -- which controls a single consolidated budget, has significant discretionary resources from both state and non-state sources, and (as a constitutionally autonomous university) has freedom to initiate independent efforts -- is able to direct resources toward areas such as undergraduate and K-12 education. The UC system office's ability to retain

TABLE 4
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS AND LEVEL OF SYSTEM OFFICE INVOLVEMENT
(Highest/Most Complex to Lowest/Least Complex)

Emphasis on Undergraduate Education

Facilitation/Resources	Regulation	% Undergrad. Enrollment
UC	UW	SUNY
UW	UC	UW
SUNY	UNC	UNC
UNC	SUNY	UC

Emphasis on K-12 Educator Preparation/Other K-12 Activities

Facilitation/Resources	Regulation	% Educ. Degrees/Credentials
UC	UNC	SUNY
UNC	UW	UNC
UW	UC	UW
SUNY	SUNY	UC

University System Complexity

Size (# of Campuses)	Diversity of Campus Types
SUNY	SUNY
UNC	UW
UW	UNC
UC	UC

System Authority (Vis-a-Vis Campuses, State)

UC
UNC
UW
SUNY

discretionary funding, as well as the scope of university functions and its tradition as a "single" institution that expanded from the first campus at Berkeley, is reflected in the number of system office staff. Currently, the UC system office employs over 100 professional staff whose responsibilities include academic matters involving such areas as program review, academic planning, student admissions, academic personnel, and university/school collaborative research programs. By contrast, the other three system offices each employ about 15 to 30 professional staff in these areas (although these numbers are difficult to determine, since each system labels and divides tasks differently).

Other significant factors may be the heterogeneity and number of campuses in the system, and the current budget situation. For example, SUNY's huge size and heterogeneity may prevent it from being much more than a "loose confederation." In addition, SUNY has been especially hard hit by budget cuts in recent years, and its system office is able to control little discretionary funding. The top system leader's views regarding the system's functions also appear significant.

4. ***Impact of system offices***. According to one system administrator, system office initiatives have produced "changes at the edges," but, she noted, "they were not intended to create radical transformations." Nevertheless, system offices have had an impact in setting university-wide agendas and facilitating campus reforms in undergraduate and K-12 education. System offices in the study provided campus administrators and faculty with access to resources, both within and outside the system, that they might otherwise not have obtained.

The ultimate impact of system office initiatives depends heavily on uncertain and changeable budget fortunes and system leadership. To date, this has been most apparent at SUNY, where drastic budget cuts over the last few years (and even greater cuts to the system office's own budget) and the appointment of a new system

chancellor who has urged greater decentralization have led to the reduction, termination, or postponement of a number of system office activities. For example, over the last several years, the number of professional staff in the SUNY system office's Office of Academic Programs and Research has dropped from 8-10 to four; an administrative position targeting teacher education issues has been left unfilled for the past three years; the 1985 teacher education report (under the previous chancellor) has not been implemented; and funding for the Chancellor's Venture Fund was suspended after one year.

5. ***Support versus regulation.*** While university system administrations provided support and access to resources, especially to campus faculty or areas with less on-campus access to resources, system administrations' requirements at times conflicted with campus administrations' or senates' discretion and autonomy, particularly with regard to the establishment of new academic programs. System administrations also at times impeded campuses' own undergraduate or K-12 reform efforts, where these were not congruent with the system office's. For example, at one campus, the system office's call for campuses to strengthen student assessment procedures meant that the campus needed to divert limited resources away from plans to revise its general education program.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. ***Balancing systemwide needs and campus autonomy.*** System and campus administrators and faculty need to recognize that both systemwide needs and campus autonomy are critical. System offices can bring a broader perspective than campuses on the overall needs of the campuses and the state as a whole. In this regard, system offices and system chief executives may be especially important in

exercising leadership on matters that have relatively low priority on any particular campus (such as education) but that are important to the system as a whole or to the state. Where a central entity within the university has not ensured an appropriate balance of programs, particular program areas may disappear entirely, as has happened at SUNY. Moreover, where a system office does not exercise adequate quality control, other, more political actors may step in to fill the vacuum; at SUNY, the system office's reluctance actively to review and, where appropriate, disapprove, proposed programs with weak rationales appears to have led to a shift in control over academic matters toward the state education department and division of the budget.

On the other hand, system offices may intrude on the unique qualities and strengths of a campus if they attempt to impose an inappropriately standardized set of priorities or expectations. System offices may also impede a campus's own reform initiatives if the immediate system priority (often state-driven) differs from the campus's priorities. As Aims McGuinness has noted, "The challenge for multicampus systems is to achieve a balance between the need for far more visible and effective policy leadership and the need for far more flexible, decentralized, and independent institutions within their jurisdictions" (cited by Lee, 1992).

2. ***Sustaining risk-taking ventures***. If system offices are to exercise leadership, they must take stands. Reform initiatives are high-risk enterprises, and they are difficult for system offices to maintain in the face of conflicting university norms, budget cuts, and the intrinsic problem of institutionalizing change. Yet without sustained outside (i.e., system office) support, especially in the early years of a new initiative, campus and systemwide reforms in lower-priority areas -- like undergraduate or K-12 education -- may die (Hawthorne and Zusman, 1992). Where system support for new projects has been suspended or withdrawn because of

budgetary problems or change in leadership (for example, SUNY's Chancellor's Venture Fund or UC's Educational Leadership Institute for faculty-superintendent collaboration), the initiatives frequently have had little impact and have been terminated. If system offices undertake or promote new initiatives, then until such projects become institutionalized (i.e., until they develop clear objectives and procedures to reach those objectives and generate stable resources, participants, and ongoing commitment), system administrations should ensure the necessary time and resources, and avoid premature evaluation, to enable new efforts to succeed.

The *process* by which system offices seek to promote change, however, may be more important than particular system-initiated projects or the relatively few system-administered programs. System offices can build communities of interest and expertise across campuses and build bridges between the university and other organizations. In this regard, one of the most important roles that system offices can play is to empower relatively weak campus actors (e.g., faculty interested in teaching improvement) by bringing them together and by providing visibility and credibility for their efforts. As a system administrator noted, system offices can both "give permission" for campus actors to undertake reform efforts and "extend an invitation" for them to do so.

3. ***Future system office roles***. The extent to which university system offices will in the future be involved in addressing issues of undergraduate or K-12 education is uncertain. As they already have at SUNY, budget cuts and change in leadership are likely to affect other system offices' roles, resources, and priorities. Facing large budget cuts to the university this past summer, for example, UC's former president decided to cut the system administration by a greater percentage than the rest of the university -- including cuts or termination of some system-administered projects. In addition, UC's new president, J.W. Peltason, has

repeatedly stated his belief in the importance of decentralization. Conversely, however, continuing external pressures to improve university performance and leadership in the critical areas of undergraduate education and public K-12 education may well prompt continued system office involvement in these areas. Indeed, some have suggested that budget cuts will give more, not less, clout to university system administrations, as they are given or assume the task of reallocating resources and "downsizing" the university. What is more certain is that, as public universities across the U.S. face difficult budget decisions in the 1990s, university system offices will themselves face new questions regarding their roles and responsibilities at large. How these questions are answered and by whom -- state policy makers, university officials, campus administrators and faculty, and/or systemwide faculties -- will affect the future directions of the universities.

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